

THE SERGEANT JEROME PEIRCE COLLECTION

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ENVELOPE



LETTER TRANSCRIPTION

Waterford Va (Loudo[u]n County)

Sat Eve 1st Nov 1862.

My own dear Wife,

All is stir and Commotion in Camp, and I have but a few moments to write you as we have got to "rally out" and get *three days rations* for a *march* on the *morrow, Sunday* again, *Sabbath* for the soldier!

The mail arrived today, and how eagerly was it received! Letters from you dear Self and Lulu—bless my little darling and a thousand kisses. Sister Abbie, beautiful as ever. Sister *Martha Haynes*! kindly and affectionate, will reply as soon as possible. Also Edw^d Peirce, and two papers, from Mary at O. and Abbie (Register).

I hope you will receive this at Billerica where I should like to form one of the Circle. Have been *interrupted* to get *rations* and if you Could see what we have you would not think we would *starve*. My *haversack* and part of knapsack, *stuffed* with nice *hard bread*, unusually white and clean, *Salt Pork*, very nice, and I have become a great lover of it *raw* (with mustard) or fried, Coffee, Sugar, Molasses--two

little bottles full. We Cook a great deal, and have *studied* up some rare dishes, with apples, hard bread &c. We have another ration of *fresh meat* so we have nice *steak, occasionally*.

We have lived far better than I expected, on the whole, so you need not feel concerned. So much about that part, and it is far better and *healthier* for us to live on our rations, and I really love them and have a grand appetite. A little event yesterday. Got a pass out with Henry M. at *noon*, got a nice dinner, sat at a table and in *chairs* for the first time since leaving Mass. Two agreeable *Quaker* ladies, chatty and good *union* people. Had fried Ham, nice bread, *sauce* peach, apple, *tomatoes*, and other des[s]ert, *pumpkin* and *Apple* pies. So we *lived* for once in “old *Virginia*.” Told them of my family at home, and they seemed to feel deeply the necessity of our Coming from home &c[.] This Country has been strongly for the Union, and the town in particular. It is quite a Village, and a Co of *Cavalry* was raised here.

I wrote a letter the day we left the last Camp, the “Crossing of the Potomac” &c but we have been favored since. It is a beautiful Country, far ahead of Md, and if *Yankees* could live here a few years it would be still better. The land is rolling, and mountains in the distant [sic] on every hand. Had a good march, about (ten miles)[.] I never bore one as well, and they all tell me I am a “*tough one*”, so you may feel for the present at least, that I am spared for some good end, I trust. We have done little here but wait for provision trains, and let other divisions move on on [sic] past us. I expect we go to *Leesburg* tomorrow. My impression is, and I have [heard] it expressed by several, is that we move on to crowd the Rebs into the *mountains*, where they must starve, fight, or surrender, and so spare life on our side. at the same time, a move up from the South to Richmond, and Congress, Combined will bring things to a close, for all feel that it *can't* go on a great while, and I think so. I feel in the best of spirits, study to keep well and cheerful, and grow to the work daily.

One thing I must mention. “They say” the *letters* from here are detained at Washington some days, on account of the movements that are going on. While we get yours the *third* day, and it seems as tho' we were near home.

I read with much interest, and satisfaction, of your visits at the *Harringtons*, &c. I want you to go about all you can, and feel that I am in a good work and trying to do my part as becomes a *good soldier*, and we must trust that all will end well.

You did not tell me what you done with the things. I hope they will not be molested. Please send me extra sheets of paper pretty often, as in our *large moves* the [Sutlers] cannot follow us, and it is hard to get *passes* to go beyond the lines, so even *stationa[r]y* will be a scarce article.

You need not attempt to send me many things, but I wish you would send a silk *Colored handkerchief*. it will take but a stamp or two. send in a *letter*, for packages Came today by mail--*Mittens, gloves*, and such things, (I have some good *gloves*, that Albert S gave me), so that I need nothing but the *Hdkf*.

You ask how we wash &c. We get along nicely. Plenty of soap, and good too, and *wood* and *water* is a *consideration* whenever we halt. there is a brook about six *roods* [sic] from my tent, and I expected to have washed my woollen [sic] shirt today—rest tomorrow. read the Register, and *write*, but have learned to expect everything and *anything*. I Keep clean, and have no trouble from *vermin* or anything of the kind[.] you would see no change, only darker *skin* and my last winter's *beard*.

Got a nice bedding of *Straw* today, and shall sleep warm *tonight*[.] have not *suffered* in that line. It is quite mild. Could have *bathed comfortably* today, and as we are moving South shall not suffer at present. We have our *hardships*, but we find much that is very pleasant, and become habituated to what would seem to you *hard things*. Our general fare is much better than my excursion to Thompsons *pond*, that summer, especially in the way of *sleeping*. I may not think to answer all your questions, but you must repeat them. On the last march Came upon one or two pretty *feathers*, in the *road*, which I send for *book* marks for *Lulu*. I hope she will be careful of them, for her papa's sake, and the associations, for I *caught* at them *quick*, while in full step, with crowd front and rear, and my load to

steady &c. One is a *guinea* hen, which abound here. They have solid stone *churches* here, without *spires*, standing off in the fields, shaded by trees, and grave yard near by, and looking quite *picturesque* (do I spell the last word aright?) We passed one Called *Rehoboth*. They all have some Scriptural, or pretty name.

It is late, and must close, for the hour is long past 1/2 past 8 for "*out lights*," but a great many are writing, and they seem disposed to give us time for a word.

Tell Abbie I appreciated the picture of the scene at the Drs[?] Sund[ay] Eve, but oh what a contrast to where I was! refer her to my last letter. Will write her when I can, but *on the march* all is *uncertain* and time is not our own, but give her much love. Mr *Stevens* & H. *Boyden* were left at the hospital in *Weaverton* Md. Boyden was *not very* well--weak from *Measles*. Mr S. I did not suppose, unable to come on. Some get detailed to act as nurses in hospitals. he may do so—has not come up yet. I may add a word in the morn, if not, Adieu. love to all from you[r] loving, wand[er]ing husband[.]

Jerome